

too-often unseaworthy boats bound for Europe. The prevalence of Eritreans among refugees has been overshadowed by refugees from the Middle East, especially Syria. The United Kingdom, one of the prime destinations for Eritrean refugees, apparently wanted to slow down the flow of Eritreans into the country. Earlier this year, the UK reduced the percentage of Eritrean asylum claims from 95 percent to 28 percent.

Directly addressing the root causes of the flight of Eritreans seems a better policy than trying to determine the final destination of Eritreans who feel forced to leave home. That means an enhanced level of communication between Eritrea's government and the international community. There have been quiet contacts between Eritrea's government, the U.S. Government, and civil society. A hearing I convened yesterday examined how such contacts have developed.

Can the United States form a relationship with a government it has under sanction?

Does the dire situation in which Eritrea's people live require an alteration of U.S. policy?

What would a change in policy mean for the international effort to hold Eritrea's government responsible for blatant human rights violations?

These and other questions must be answered before there is any policy adjustment toward Eritrea.

#### NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

### HON. DENNIS A. ROSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to a very special POW/MIA memorial dedication ceremony taking place in my home town of Lakeland, Florida.

As flags are raised across America this week in honor of National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we must stand united as a nation remembering and honoring those captured and those who have gone missing while serving our great country, as well as their loved ones. Today, as in every day, we shall live by the POW/MIA flag's creed: You Are Not Forgotten.

No other country has devoted as much energy and as many resources to account for its missing or captured like the United States of America. Our debt to American prisoners of war, those missing in action, and the families of these brave soldiers can never truly be repaid.

America's service members are the backbone of the freedom and prosperity this country has been blessed with for more than two hundred years. The sacrifices made by these courageous and selfless men and women in uniform, on behalf of perfect strangers, embodies the American spirit of patriotism.

Few among us will ever understand the pain and fear associated with knowing a loved one is captured or missing in a warzone across the globe. We as a nation must join together to honor those who have sacrificed so greatly today, and every day. Without their sacrifices, we would not be able to enjoy the liberties we are blessed with today. Let us never take for

granted their selfless protection of our great nation and its people.

May God continue to watch over our valiant soldiers, and return them safely home, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

#### PRESIDENT OBAMA ENDANGERS U.S. CITIZENS BY CLOSING GITMO

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, sitting in Guantanamo Bay are cold-blooded, calculating terrorists that have either already killed Americans or had planned to do so. The high-security prisoners that remain at GITMO committed some of the most repulsive crimes known to all of us.

Despite this fact, this Administration—since literally day one—has promised to close GITMO all together and release these terrorists back into the world. Mr. Speaker, why would we do that?

Many of the terrorists we have released have re-entered the battlefield. The Administration even admitted earlier this year that at least 12 former detainees were implicated in attacks overseas against Americans and our allies—and those are just the ones we know of. So why would we continue to let terrorists go?

Mr. Speaker, I have been to GITMO. Most Americans would be surprised to know it's actually nicer than most facilities we have here in the states. GITMO has soccer fields, volleyball courts, table tennis, you name it.

It also has new medical facilities and new dental facilities. When I visited GITMO, I ate the same meal the prisoners did, and the food was good.

But the Administration is more concerned with the President's legacy than global safety and the potential victims of these prisoners' attacks. I do not think the White House has its priorities straight.

That's why I'm happy to support Congresswoman WALORSKI's efforts to prohibit the transfer of any detainees from GITMO. Transferring detainees from Guantanamo endangers American citizens, and it endangers our national security. Put simply, it is a bad idea.

And that's just the way it is.

#### HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF LTC CHARLES S. KETTLES

### HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a recent Medal of Honor recipient, LTC Charles S. Kettles. LTC Kettles will be honored at the Fort Wolters Historical Park's Medal of Honor Day in Mineral Wells, Texas on September 17, 2016. This ceremony recognizes the lives of individuals who were stationed at Fort Wolters at some point in their career and received our nation's highest military commendation.

On May 15, 1967, Charles was serving as the Flight Commander of the 176th Aviation Company in the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, American Division near Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam. On that day, an airborne infantry unit came under heavy enemy fire and suffered casualties. Charles immediately volunteered to lead a flight of six UH-1D helicopters to carry reinforcements to the embattled force and evacuate his wounded brothers. Upon arriving at the landing zone, Charles and his crew faced a savage barrage of enemy fire that inflicted heavy damage to their fleet. Despite all of this, Charles refused to depart until all helicopters were loaded to capacity. With his aircraft severely damaged and leaking fuel, Charles skillfully guided his helicopter back to base.

Later that day, the Infantry Battalion Commander requested immediate, emergency extraction of the remaining 40 soldiers that were stranded after their helicopter was downed by enemy fire. Again, Charles volunteered to lead a flight of six evacuation helicopters to return back to the deadly landing zone, making this his third trip that day. During the extraction, Charles was told that all personnel were accounted for and he, along with his team and Army gunships, left the battlefield.

Shortly after departing, Charles was informed that eight troops had been unable to reach the evacuation helicopters due to being pinned down by intense heavy fire. With complete disregard for his safety, Charles passed the lead to another helicopter and reversed course back to the landing zone. Without any artillery and tactical support, enemy forces concentrated all firepower on Charles' helicopter. His aircraft was immediately damaged by a mortar round that shattered his front windshields and the body of the helicopter was riddled with small arms and machine gun bullets. Despite these circumstances, Charles was able to buy enough time to allow the remaining eight soldiers to board the helicopter. Once in the air, Charles was able to safely guide his severely mangled aircraft back to the base.

Without LTC Kettles' heroic deeds that day, the dozens of soldiers he had saved would not have come home to their loved ones. His selfless acts of valor exemplified the values of honor and service that makes our nation's military the finest in the world. It is with great pleasure and honor that I am able to share his story with all of my colleagues in the House.

#### HONORING SHELLEY KESSLER, RETIRED EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER, SAN MATEO COUNTY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

### HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of an outstanding woman leader in San Mateo County, Ms. Shelley Kessler. She is leaving her position as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council, a position that she has held—and honored through her exemplary leadership—for twenty years. I am honored to call Shelley a trusted friend.

She is a remarkable leader in public policy. She is a person who is willing to listen and to